

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, every year on Memorial Day, we recognize those who fought for our nation and gave their lives in the name of democracy and freedom. It is a time for us to remember the patriotism they showed as they went into battle, the courage with which they fought, and the ultimate sacrifice they made for our country.

My home state of Michigan has lost many good men and women to war. We lost 18,906 people in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Gulf War. We lost over 2,600 men and women in Vietnam—more people per capita than any other state in the nation. We understand the honor in answering a nation's call to serve, and we know what it means to lose parents, brothers, sisters, and children to battle. As a Vietnam-era veteran, and the son of a WWII veteran, I know in my heart the value of this service.

Our lost soldiers have earned parades, memorial services, and events in their honor. But they have also earned a commitment from their nation that we will never forget their service and will treat all who fight for our country with dignity and respect. We should remember our lost soldiers not just in words, but deeds. We should honor their sacrifices by providing good health care, benefits, and compensation to our veterans who fought alongside them and the current members of our Armed Forces. We should honor them by fulfilling all the promises that we made to them and their families when they answered the call of duty.

As we observe Memorial Day, let us not be content with honoring our soldiers just this one day each year. Let us remember in our hearts the ultimate gift these men and women gave to us. And let us keep in our prayers those men and women who are serving our nation overseas today. In their courage and strength, they set an example for all of us and remind us of what it means to be an American.

VETERANS' AND SURVIVORS' BENEFITS EXPANSION ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2002

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for H.R. 4085, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2002. Our federal policy towards veterans recognizes the importance of their service to our nation. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers, directly or in conjunction with other federal agencies, programs

that provide compensation for disabilities sustained or worsened as a result of active duty in military service. The VA also provides pensions for totally disabled, poor war veterans. Furthermore, the VA offers cash payments for certain categories of dependents and/or survivors. The VA gives free medical care for conditions sustained during military service, and medical care for other conditions, much of which is provided free to low income veterans.

In addition, the Department of Veteran Affairs supplies education, training, rehabilitation, and job placement services to assist veterans upon their return to civilian life. The VA also administers loan guarantees to help them obtain homes. Moreover, the VA provides life insurance to enhance the veteran's financial security for their dependents, and burial assistance to the families of veterans when they die. Thus, the VA does a lot to enhance the lives of our veterans.

The responsibility to care for veterans, their spouses, their survivors and their dependents can last a long time. An example of this is that the last dependent of a Revolutionary War veteran died in 1911, and the last dependent of a veteran of the War of 1812 died in 1946, and the last dependent of a veteran of the Mexican War in 1962. Subsequently, about 650 children and widows of Spanish-American War veterans still receive VA compensation or pensions.

This bill contains provisions that would affect a wide range of veterans' programs, including disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, housing, insurance, and readjustment benefits. This bill also provides an annual cost-of-living increase for veterans' benefits, and expands certain benefits for veterans and their survivors.

Accordingly, this bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of veterans' disability compensation, as of December 1, 2002. This cost of living increase gives veterans a 2.6% increase. This matches the automatic increases received by most federal benefit programs. This is important, because we should not burden our veterans financially.

The bill also adds additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled adult children, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

The CBO estimates that enacting this bill would increase direct spending by \$25 million in 2003, \$123 million over the 2003–2007 period, and \$260 million over the 2003–2012 period, but the CBO estimates that any such outlays would be insignificant because it takes the Department of Veterans Affairs several months to process most benefit claims.

Therefore, I support our veterans and strongly support this bill to increase compensation to our veterans.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ELE'S PLACE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of Ele's Place in Lansing, Michigan, and the caring volunteers and community leaders who have built a remarkable non-profit program for children grieving the loss of a loved one.

Beginning in 1991 with volunteer help and a dream, Ele's Place has worked in borrowed space in a Lansing church basement to reach out to grieving children in a compassionate and caring setting. Today, Ele's Place is a haven where children can learn to heal in trying times.

Ele's Place also offers guidance to parents and adults helping children through the loss of a family member, friends, classmate or other loved one. By helping children and their significant adults deal with grief, Ele's Place has an immeasurable and extended impact on the entire community.

As Ele's Place launches the construction of its very own facility this month, this group of caring professionals and volunteers are poised to expand their enormous impact on the grieving families of the Lansing, Michigan region.

Mr. Speaker, we wish Ele's Place well and congratulate them on this major accomplishment. We are honored to support the work of the dedicated team that makes Ele's Place possible.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE OF TOMMY MARLIN

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding public service of a good friend of mine, Tommy Marlin. Tommy is retiring as the Sumner County executive at the end of his current term, which ends on August 31. He has served as the county's chief executive since 1994, but has served the residents of Sumner County, Tennessee, for 26 years.

Tommy began his career in public service in 1976 after being elected the county's assessor of property. He might have chosen a different career path in light of the fact his brother and nephew were wrestlers in the National Wrestling Association. But Tommy was looking for a more combative arena to showcase his talents, so he chose politics.

I'm glad Tommy entered the field of public service because he has helped me in my own career. He has been a longtime friend and advisor from my very first days in Congress.

In 1988, Tommy was named Overall Outstanding County Official of the Year by the

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